

Nature Religion in America

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FROM THE

ALGONKIAN INDIANS TO THE NEW AGE



Catherine L. Albanese

With a Foreword by Martin E. Marty

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Albanese's provocative, chronological view of the diverse and changing American responses to nature proposes an uninstitutionalized religion at the center of the American experience. The author (Religion/U.C. at Santa Barbara) is as delighted with her discovery of a nature religion as a prospector who's hit pay dirt. Acknowledging at the outset that the spiritual orientations of Americans and the ...

More Anglo-American Puritans stand as a ""classic study in religious difference,"" Albanese traces shifts in the settlers' view of wilderness as spiritual testing ground. By 1776, what Albanese calls ""republican religion"" was proclaiming nature as an ideal that mirrored American vigor and purity, with Jefferson adapting the Enlightenment to proclaim that the ""laws of nature"" entitled the republic to an equal station ""among the powers of the earth."" The author charts the passage of nature religion from the Doctrine of Manifest Destiny and the yahoo frontier hero to the gentler Transcendentalists and early conservationists, and shows how the ""physical religion"" of the homeopaths and chiropractors of the 19th century prefigures today's healing movements. To Albanese, America's church is democratic, comfortable with Mary Baker Eddy and Annie Dillard in the same pew, and admitting as members anyone who has ever sought meaning, morality, inspiration, and even justification for political aims in nature. Well-written and researched, Albanese's work is vivid and original cultural and intellectual history--but perhaps less-than-solid theology, as she attempts to drive an unruly herd of Quakers, mind-healers, hydropaths, Native Americans, Greens, and ""the king of the wild frontier"" into the same corral.

作者介绍:

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评论

"Nature religion" as a category for analysis is the author's own construction, which, according to Albanese, is the center of American religious experiences, and explains the continuity between American past and present, linking the diverse historical and contemporary "-isms" including nativism, puritanism, republicanism, transcendentalism and the New Age as well. Covering a period from the 17th to the 20th centuries, this book tries to find a unifying element in a more diversified society.

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书评

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